

6

Lesson 6 HTML 4.0 Tips & Tricks

Lesson Topics

- ▶ `
` and `<P>` Attributes
- ▶ Forcing a New Browser Window
- ▶ `<META>` Tag
- ▶ Ordered List `START` Attribute
- ▶ Lesson 6 Summary

 and <P> Attributes

The Break tag,
, and the Paragraph tag, <P>, are probably the two most frequently used tags within the HTML language. While the functionality and role of these two tags is very straightforward, new functionality has been added that can assist you in your page layout.

<BR CLEAR=all>

Aligning inline images and text (especially text broken into sections or paragraphs) in a particular manner has always been a frustrating endeavor. CLEAR, a new attribute to the
 tag, allows you to manipulate the position of text surrounding an inline image.

The value set of the CLEAR attribute is shown below:

```
<BR CLEAR=all|left|right|none>
```

The CLEAR attribute is used to position text past inline images on either margin, as you learned in Exercise 4-4. CLEAR=left moves the text after the line break past any inline images on the left margin; CLEAR=right does the same thing with inline images on the right.

An example of the effect of the CLEAR=all attribute setting is shown in Figure 6-1.

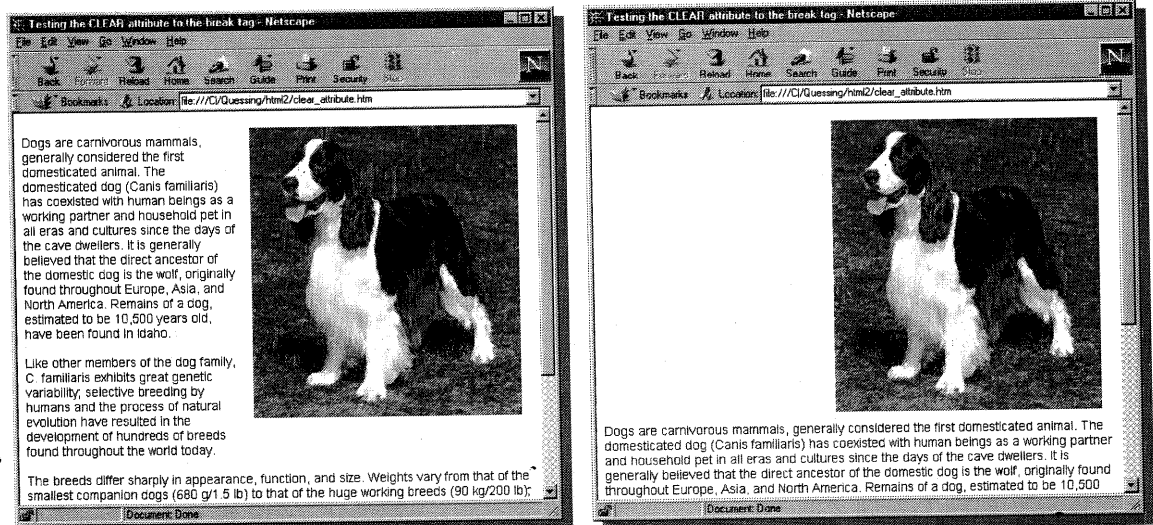


Figure 6-1: Effect of CLEAR: left page features
 tag; right page features <BR CLEAR=all>

A more practical demonstration of the utility provided by the `CLEAR` attribute is if you desire to position a block of text adjacent to an image, but have all following text fall *below* the image. Figure 6-2 presents an example of this.

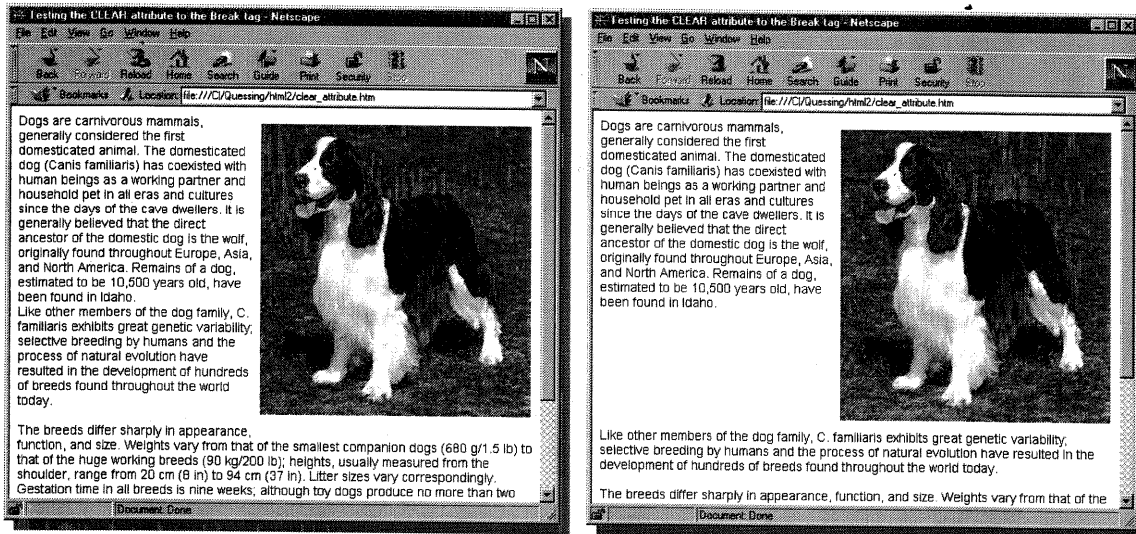


Figure 6-2: Left page uses the plain `
` tag; right page uses `<BR CLEAR=all>`



You could not accomplish this effect with the `
` tag without the `CLEAR` attribute or by using the `<P>` tag.

<P ALIGN=right>

The <P> tag now features an ALIGN attribute that can be used to align text blocks.

The value set of the ALIGN attribute is shown below:

```
<P ALIGN=left|center|right|justify>
```

Because left is the default of the <P> tag if it has no ALIGN attribute, using ALIGN=left is a waste of effort. The justify attribute value formats text in a manner that is commonly called “full justification” or “fully justified.” This means the text lines up flush with both the left and right margins.

An example of the various effects of the different <P> tag values is shown in Figure 6-3.

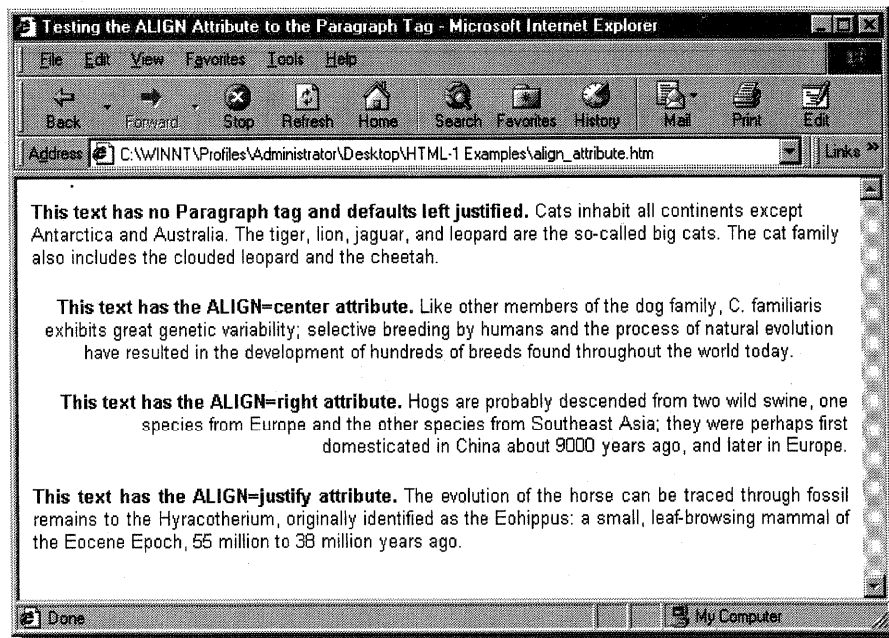


Figure 6-3: Paragraphs justified left (default), center, right, and full

Exercise 6-1: Justifying Web Page Text With the <P> Tag

In this exercise, you will justify blocks of text using the ALIGN attribute to the <P> tag.

1. Toggle over to Notepad.
2. Open the document JUSTIFY_TEXT.HTM from the HTML-1 folder.
3. Add the following script that appears in bold:

```
<HTML>

<HEAD>
<TITLE>Using ALIGN to Justify Web Page Text</TITLE>
</HEAD>

<BODY><P>

<B>This text has no Paragraph tag and defaults left
justified.</B> Cats inhabit all continents except Antarctica and
Australia. The tiger, lion, jaguar, and leopard are the so-called
big cats. The cat family also includes the clouded leopard and
the cheetah.

<P ALIGN=center><B>This text has the ALIGN=center attribute.</B>
Like other members of the dog family, C. familiaris exhibits
great genetic variability; selective breeding by humans and the
process of natural evolution have resulted in the development of
hundreds of breeds found throughout the world today.

<P ALIGN=right><B>This text has the ALIGN=right attribute.</B>
Hogs are probably descended from two wild swine, one species from
Europe and the other species from Southeast Asia; they were
perhaps first domesticated in China about 9000 years ago, and
later in Europe.

<P ALIGN=justify><B>This text has the ALIGN=justify
attribute.</B> The evolution of the horse can be traced through
fossil remains to the Hyracotherium, originally identified as the
Eohippus: a small, leaf-browsing mammal of the Eocene Epoch, 55
million to 38 million years ago.

</BODY>
</HTML>
```

4. Save the document.
5. Toggle over to your Web browser.
6. Open the document JUSTIFY_TEXT.HTM from the HTML-1 folder.



The Web page text is now justified according to the value sets of the ALIGN attributes placed in the <P> tag, as shown in Figure 6-4.

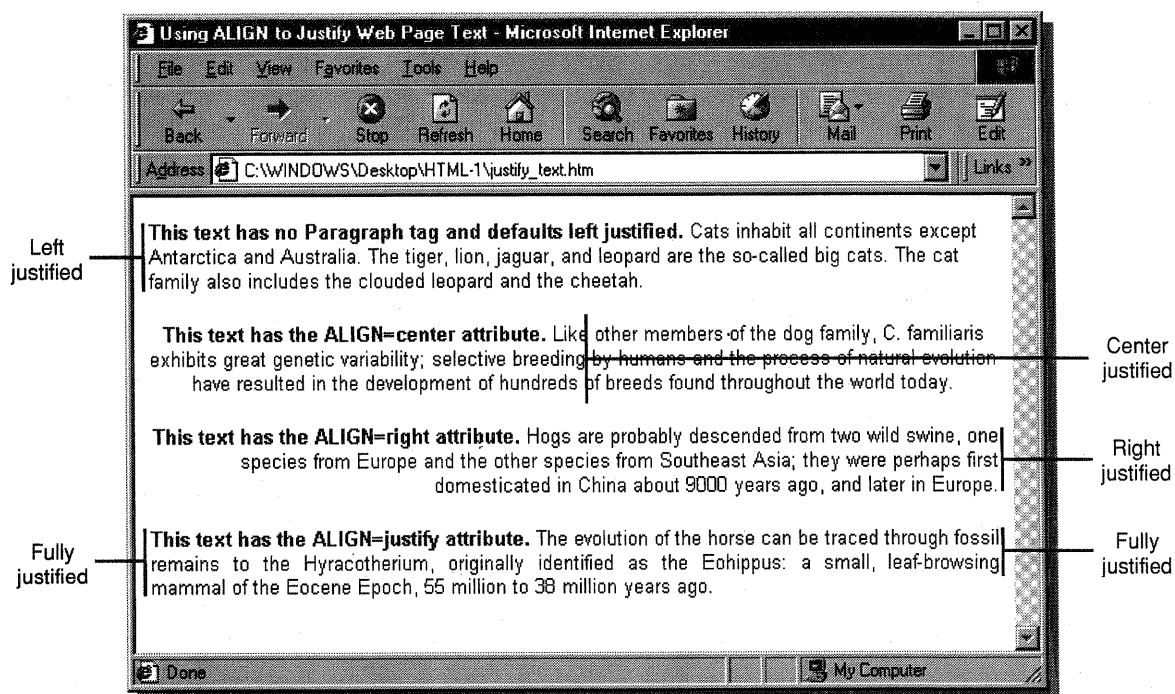


Figure 6-4: Text justified using the ALIGN attribute to the <P> tag

Forcing a New Browser Window

You learned in the last lesson how to script basic anchor tags to create hyperlinks from one Web page to another. While this basic functionality is at the heart of the navigational scheme of the Web, it can be enhanced with several subtle but powerful methods.

Keep Users at Your Site

Using a simple attribute to the Anchor tag, you can force a referred Web page to display in a new browser window. This has the effect of providing the user with two overlapping browser windows on his or her desktop, thus preserving the referring Web page from which the user accessed the link.

When done browsing the content on the “secondary” browser window, the user simply closes the window, making the original window active. You have probably accessed hyperlinks of this type in the past.

This is a powerful method by which you can keep users at your site while they temporarily explore the contents of Web pages *outside* of your site. While linking to outside content increases the overall utility of your Web site, it risks sending a visitor to another Web site and having them never return to yours. This can decrease your Web site traffic, your business, and your overall return on your Web presence investment.

The TARGET Attribute

The attribute that allows an Anchor tag to display referenced Web pages in different browser windows is TARGET. The TARGET attribute, which is used frequently when creating hyperlinks between different frames on the same Web page, has many different attributes. For our purposes, only one attribute is necessary: `_blank`.

This syntax of the TARGET attribute is shown below:

```
<A HREF=http://www.ddcpub.com TARGET=_blank>
```



Different browsers provide different levels of “overlap” between the referring browser window and the destination window. Netscape Navigator 3.0, for example, provides little or no offset (possibly making the user perceive that there is only one browser window). Navigator 4.0 provides a substantial amount of overlap, making it easy for a user to perceive that two windows are open.

An example of a new browser window opened by the `TARGET=_blank` attribute is shown in Figure 6-5.

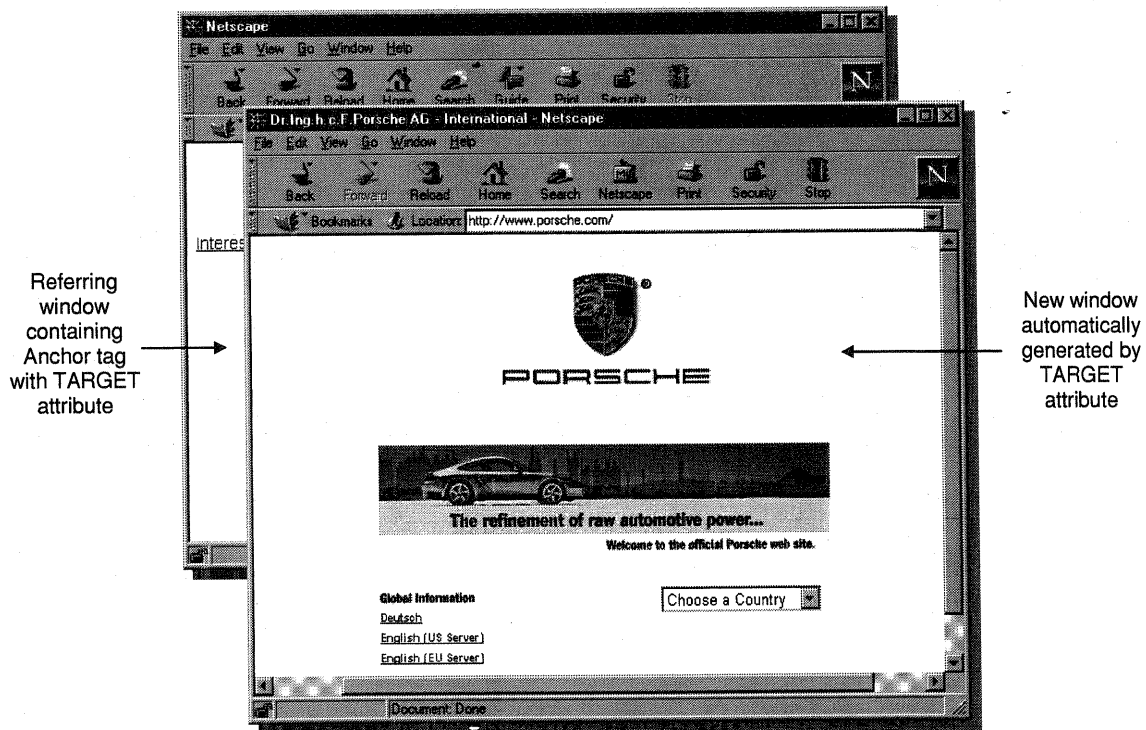


Figure 6-5: New browser window opened with `TARGET=_blank` attribute

Exercise 6-2: Generating a New Browser Window

In this exercise, you will create an Anchor tag that automatically generates a new browser window in which the content of the referred Web page is displayed.

1. Toggle over to Notepad and open a new document.
2. Type the following script:

```
<HTML>

<HEAD>
<TITLE>Using TARGET to Automatically Open a New Browser
Window</TITLE>
</HEAD>

<BODY>

<FONT SIZE=+2 COLOR=navy><B>TARGET Anchor</B></FONT><BR>

<A HREF=http://www.verio.com TARGET=_blank>Want to learn about a
national Internet Service Provider?</A><P>

<HR WIDTH=70% SIZE=6><P>

<FONT SIZE=+2 COLOR=navy><B>Regular Anchor</B></FONT><BR>

<A HREF=http://www.verio.com>Want to learn more about a national
Internet Service Provider?</A><P>

</BODY>
</HTML>
```

3. Save the document as TARGET_ANCHOR.HTM to the HTML-1 folder.
4. Toggle over to your Web browser.
5. Open the file TARGET_ANCHOR.HTM from the HTML-1 folder.
6. Click the Want to learn about a national Internet Service Provider? anchor below the TARGET Anchor section.



A new browser window appears and the content of the Web page located at www.verio.com is displayed in the new browser window, as shown in Figure 6-6 on the following page.

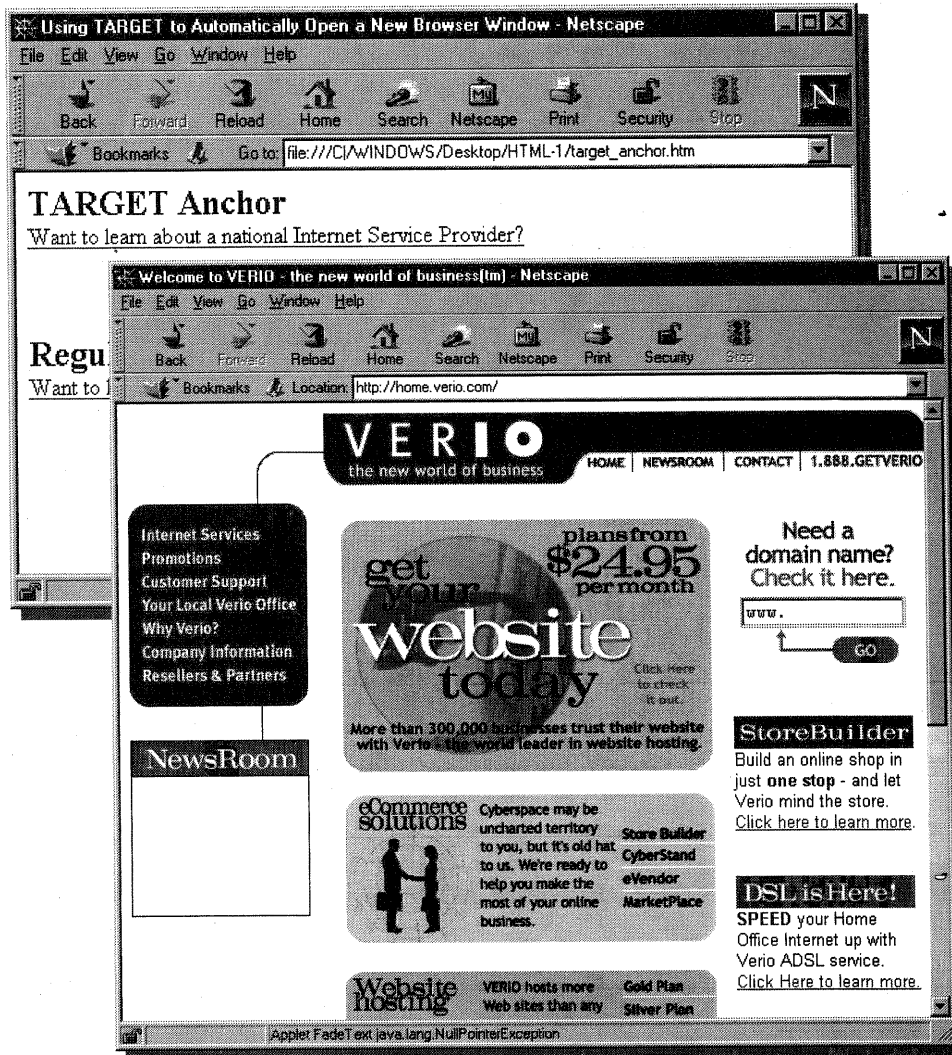


Figure 6-6: New browser window (foreground) created using the TARGET attribute

7. Close the new browser window.
8. Click the **Want to learn more about a national Internet Service Provider?** anchor below the **Regular Anchor** section.



The Web page located at www.verio.com is displayed in the same browser window in which the referring anchor was clicked.

<META> Tag

The <META> tag can be used for many advanced functions in HTML. Some of the most useful functions of the <META> tag are:

- helping search engines properly index your pages and users find your pages when conducting search engine queries;
- automatically pushing a new Web page to a user (without the user clicking a hyperlink);
- providing a copyright and date for each Web page on your site;
- providing an e-mail address for the publisher or author of a Web page;
- specifying a description for a Web page that is used by search engines to identify your page within a database (for purposes of including on a query hit list).

<META> Tag Characteristics

<META> tags have a relatively unique syntax. This syntax often confuses those not familiar with <META> because of the wide variety of applications of this tag. The following syntactical rules apply to <META> tags:

- <META> tags always appear between the opening and closing <HEAD> tags;
- <META> is an empty tag;
- <META> is unique in that it has two required attributes; these two attributes are NAME or HTTP-EQUIV and CONTENT. The value of the NAME or HTTP-EQUIV attribute describes the *type* of information provided by the <META> tag. The CONTENT attribute value provides the actual information;
- multiple <META> tags can appear between the opening and closing <HEAD> tags of an HTML document.

An example of a <META> tag that automatically refreshes a Web page with a different page:

```
<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="http://www.ddcpub.com">
```

An example of a <META> tag that provides keywords to a search engine for the purpose of indexing and relevancy to user queries is as follows:

```
<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="bicycles,bicycle
equipment,bicycle helmets,mountain bikes,French
racers,bicycle clothes,bicycle shoes,bicycle accessories">
```

Table 6-1 outlines the functions of the <META> tag as defined according to two attributes (HTTP-EQUIV and NAME) and their values.

<META> Attribute	Value	Details
HTTP-EQUIV	expires	<u>Date</u> : indicates the date the content "expires," often used to indicate to a search engine or other type of database when to delete the old document and index new data.
HTTP-EQUIV	reply-to	<u>E-mail Address</u> : indicates the e-mail address of the publisher or author.
HTTP-EQUIV	resource-type	<u>Category of resource</u> : indicates the type of information contained in the Web page. Common values are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>document</i> ■ <i>catalog</i> ■ <i>bibliography</i> ■ <i>news release</i>
HTTP-EQUIV	distribution	<u>Scope</u> : indicates the range or scope of the Web page's distribution or application. Common values are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>global</i> ■ <i>domestic</i> ■ <i>local</i> ■ <i>private</i>
HTTP-EQUIV	copyright	<u>Organization & Date</u> : indicates the copyright holder and date.
HTTP-EQUIV	refresh	<u>Time & URL</u> : forces a new Web page to be loaded or the current page to be reloaded after a specific number of seconds.
NAME	keywords	<u>Keywords</u> : provide a comma-separated list of keywords to be used by some search engines (AltaVista, Northern Light) when indexing your page.
NAME	description	<u>Text String</u> : this text will show up on a hit list (search results) instead of the first few lines of text from the Web page. Note that not all search engines support this feature of the <META> tag.
NAME	creation_date	<u>Date</u> : the date on which the HTML document was created (this is not the date of last revision).

Table 6-1: <META> tag attributes and attribute values

Search Engine Indexing by Keyword

Among the most useful applications of <META> is the ability to tag your Web pages with a list of specific keywords. These keywords can then be used by search engines to index your pages in a database. This improves the relevancy of results when users query a search engine using one of the keywords with which one of your pages is tagged.

For example, suppose your company is the Deluxe Bicycle Company. You could tag your pages with keywords that pertain to your business and are likely to be submitted to a search engine by a user when they are seeking information regarding the types of products you sell.



Although many books and courses show the value of the CONTENT attribute as keywords separated by spaces, the official HTML 4.0 Specification dictates that this list be separated by commas with no spaces, as follows.

- **Syntax:** <META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="keyword1, keyword2, keyword3...">
- **Example:** <META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="bicycles,bicycle parts,bicycle helmets,bicycle apparel,bicycle parts">

Search Engine Hit List Descriptions

You can add <META> tag information that provides a description of a Web page. Search engines that support this function display this information on the hit list if your page is located during a search.

Because this functionality has only recently been available, search engines have defaulted to displaying the first few lines of text from a Web page in the description of a hit on a hit list.

If the first few sentences from a Web page do not sufficiently describe the content of the page, a user may choose a different link from a hit list or not visit your site. By providing an accurate description of your site in a <META> tag, you can increase the traffic to your site.

- **Syntax:** <META NAME="description" CONTENT="description text">
- **Example:** <META NAME="description" CONTENT="DDC publishes Internet courseware and training materials. Our complete catalog of courses is available on our Web site.">

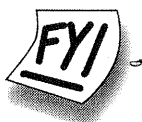
Forcing a New HTML Page to be Loaded

Using `<META>`, you can force a Web page to be automatically reloaded or a new Web page to be loaded. This application of the `<META>` tag allows you to specify the exact number of seconds that a page is displayed to a user prior to the new page loading.

This function is useful for Web sites that provide dynamic information, such as current events, weather data, sports scores, stock market indicators, etc. Using this function, you can automatically revise the content of the user's browser window without he or she having to manually reload the page.

This feature is also used for "banner screens," which are slick, graphical screens that a user first sees when visiting a Web site. Such screens provide no hyperlinks and no real content, but serve to set a tone and convey a marketing theme for the entire Web site.

- **Syntax:** `<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="time (seconds);URL=URL">`
- **Example:** `<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="5;URL=http://www.ibm.com">`



If you simply want to refresh the current page, the syntax is `CONTENT=time`, where time is the number of seconds to elapse between refreshes.

Indicating a Copyright Holder & Date

Widespread unauthorized use of images and content available via Web sites has created a legal need to protect online intellectual property. Copyright notices are one way of declaring ownership of intellectual property and helping to expedite legal action if properties are misappropriated by unauthorized parties.

While it is recommended, when applicable, that organizations declare a copyright of their materials within the body of a Web page, in clear view of site visitors, you can also index this information within a special `<META>` tag.

- **Syntax:** `<META HTTP-EQUIV="copyright" CONTENT="Organization owning copyright. - year">`
- **Example:** `<META HTTP-EQUIV="copyright" CONTENT="DDC Publishing - 2000">`

Exercise 6-3: Adding <META> Tag Information to a Web Page

In this exercise, you will add various types of <META> tag information to an HTML document.

1. Toggle over to Notepad.
2. Open META.HTM from the HTML-1 folder.
3. Add the following script that appears in bold between the opening and closing <HEAD> tags:

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Using the META Tag</TITLE>
<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh"
CONTENT="5;URL=http://www.porsche.com">
<META HTTP-EQUIV="description" CONTENT="This is the banner screen
for the Sports Car Enthusiast Web Site.">
<META NAME="creation_date" CONTENT="December 4, 2000">
<META NAME="keywords" CONTENT="porsche, sports cars,
cars, automobiles, corvette, lotus, spider, ferrari, 911, turbo,
boxster">
</HEAD>
```

4. Save the file.
5. Toggle over to your Web browser.
6. Open the file META.HTM from the HTML-1 folder.



The temporary page appears and, after five seconds, automatically launches another Web page.

Note that the <META> information is not directly visible to a user; it functions to provide information to search engines and other databases that index your Web pages.

Ordered List START Attribute

You can change the start of an ordered list using the `START` attribute. This is helpful if you wish to insert non-list text blocks into a list. What would appear to a user to be the continuation of a list is actually a different list that happens to begin its numbering scheme where the previous list stopped.

The syntax of the `START` attribute is as follows:

```
<OL START=number>
```



The value of the `START` attribute can be any integer from -2,147,483,647 to 2,147,483,648.

An example of using the `START` attribute on an ordered list is shown in Figure 6-7.

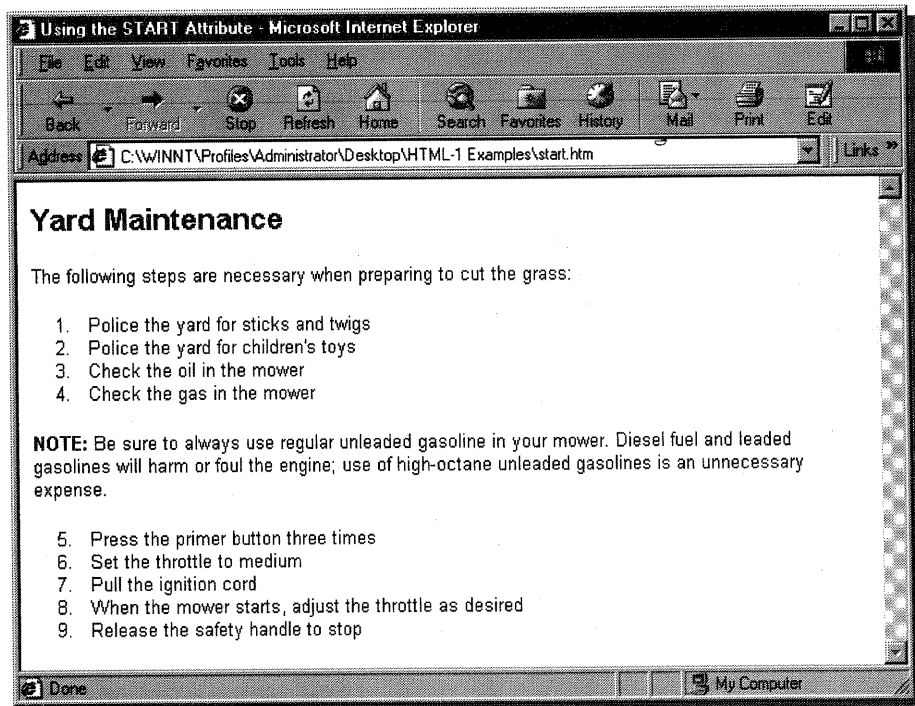


Figure 6-7: The second list uses the `START` attribute to change the numbering scheme

Exercise 6-4: Using START to Change an Ordered List Numbering Scheme

In this exercise, you will use the `START` attribute to the `` tag to change the numbering scheme of a number list.

1. Toggle over to Notepad.
2. Open the file `START.HTM` from the `HTML-1` folder.
3. Add the following script that appears in bold:

The following steps are necessary when preparing to cut the grass:

```
<OL>
<LI>Police the yard for sticks and twigs
<LI>Police the yard for children's toys
<LI>Check the oil in the mower
<LI>Check the gas in the mower
</OL>
```

```
<B>NOTE:</B> Be sure to always use regular unleaded gasoline in
your mower. Diesel fuel and leaded gasoline will harm or foul the
engine; use of high-octane unleaded gasoline is an unnecessary
expense.<P>
```

```
<OL START=5>
<LI>Press the primer button three times
<LI>Set the throttle to medium
<LI>Pull the ignition cord
<LI>When the mower starts, adjust the throttle as desired
<LI>Release the safety handle to stop
</OL>
```

4. Save the file.
5. Toggle over to your Web browser.
6. Open the file `START.HTM` from the `HTML-1` folder.



The second ordered list now begins at number 5, creating the effect of a single list annotated by text, instead of two different lists. Your browser should appear identical to Figure 6-7 on the previous page.

Lesson 6 Summary

- ▶ NAME anchors actually involve two separate but related anchors. The first anchor is a standard Anchor tag that refers to a name preceded by a pound sign (``). This tag refers to a NAME anchor. The NAME anchor, the second tag, is also an Anchor tag with a NAME attribute. In this example, the NAME anchor would appear as ``.
- ▶ The Break tag, `
`, and the Paragraph tag, `<P>`, both offer enhanced functionality under HTML 4.0. `
` now offers the CLEAR attribute. CLEAR can have values of all, left, right, or none and allow you to control how text breaks around an inline image. `<P>` now offers an ALIGN attribute, which has values of left, center, right, and justify. With the ALIGN attribute, the `<P>` tag can now control the alignment of text on a page.
- ▶ Using the TARGET attribute to the Anchor tag, you can have a hypertext anchor automatically open a referred Web page in a separate browser window. This has the effect of keeping a user at your site because the original browser window containing your Web page (and the referring hyperlink) does not change. The syntax of such a tag would appear as ``.
- ▶ The `<META>` tag performs many different functions in a Web page and for a Web site. The `<META>` tag can be formatted with two different attributes and over nine attribute values. Using `<META>`, you can help ensure that your Web pages are better indexed in a search engine's database (using keywords), provide a copyright notice, and provide a site or page description.